Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the country's foreign exchange reserves dropped to the tune of Rs. 1036.22 crores by the end of December 1989;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any steps during the last three months to maintain its foreign exchange reserves; and

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) India's foreign exchange reserves (excluding gold, Special Drawing Rights and working balances held by the Government) which stood at Rs. 6604.63 crores as on 1-4-89 decreased by Rs. 1327.33 crores to Rs. 5277.30 crores on 31-12-89.

(b) and (c) Steps have been taken to maintain the foreign exchange reserves position by initiating a number of measures to promote exports and curtail in essential imports. Attempts are being made to augment foreign exchange earnings through invisible earnings and capital inflows, including external assistance disbursements.

Payment of DA to the Central Government Employees

341. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR :

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the wholesale price index for all commodities has climbed upward during the last six months;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that with the increase in price-index the dearness allowances to the Central Government employees has become due with effect from 1st January, 1990; and

(d) if so, by when Government propose to announce the D.A. to the Central Government employees ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE) : (a) and (b) The movement of Wholesale Price Index (1981-82=100) for the period July-Dec. 1989 was as under :—

Month ending	W.P.I. (1981-82 =100)
July, 1989	164·5
August, 1989	167·1
September, 1989 . . .	167·9
October, 1989 . . .	167·9
November, 1989 . . .	167·3
December, 1989 . . .	166·4

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Orders in this regard will be issued shortly.

Foreign Exchange released for import of books

342. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what was the amount of foreign exchange released for the import of books during the last year ;

(b) whether it has come to the notice of Government that certain

importers buy books at throw-away prices but over-invoicing the sale by quoting the cover price and get higher amount of foreign exchange released; and

(c) if so, what action has been taken in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) The Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Directorate of Enforcement have initiated investigations under the provisions of F.E.R. Act, 1973 against seven importers who had indulged in over-invoicing of imports of books by quoting the cover price.

Payment of rent for hiring a tank by the STC

343. SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an amount of Rs. 1.2 lakhs has been paid by the State Trading Corporation of India to an edible oil handling agent in Delhi as rent charges for a tank which the Corporation did not hire for the period from August 1986 to August 1987;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the agent was also favoured by waiving of Corporation's stipulations on edible oil handling resulting in losses amounting to more than Rs. 4 lakhs;

(c) whether Government have inquired into the matter to fix responsibility; and

(d) if so, what is the outcome thereof and what action has been taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND TOURISM (SHRI ARUN KUMAR NEHRU) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) No Sir. The excess handling loss initially worked out by STC amounted to Rs. 4.53 lakhs. This was contested by the Handling Agent (HA) which on rechecking was found within the permissible limits. The amount withheld on the basis of initial calculation was released consequently.

(c) and (d) In view of the reply at (a) and (b) above the question does not arise.

Economic offences against former President, NCCF

344. SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA: SHRI ISH DUTT YADAV :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the replies to Unstarred Question 2781, 1585, 2565 and 3391 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 18th September, 1986, 10th May, 1988, 1st December, 1988 and 27th April, 1989 respectively and state:

(a) whether the Income Tax Department has since completed the indepth investigations and finalised assessments pertaining to huge properties worth crores of rupees owned by the former President, NCCF (i.e. "Samrat Hotel", Patna, "Cold Storage" at Danapur, Bihar, "Rice Mill" at Arrah and two Guest Houses, namely "Shyama International Inn" at Safdarjang Enclave, New Delhi and "Sun Village" near Mool Chand Crossing Ring Road, New Delhi etc.) ;

(b) if so, what are the details of the findings and what action has been taken against the guilty for evasion of Government taxes; and